

PRESS RELEASE

MONTGOMERY COUNTY NAACP UNIT'S
"YES WE COUNT" CENSUS MOBILIZATION CAMPAIGN

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**NAACP LAUNCHES 2010 CENSUS MOBILIZATION CAMPAIGN
TO ENSURE ACCURATE COUNT IN UNDERCOUNTED COMMUNITIES
LOCAL NAACP UNITS DRIVING PARTICIPATION IN THEIR COMMUNITIES**

NAACP Units in eleven states and six metropolitan areas are gearing up to launch the 2010 "Yes We Count" campaign, a national grassroots movement designed to spread the word about the importance of the 2010 Census and to motivate residents in their communities to complete and return their 2010 Census questionnaire.

The Montgomery County Maryland NAACP "Yes We Count" Campaign is designed to reach traditionally undercounted populations by stressing the importance of an accurate census count, including how data are collected and used. NAACP volunteers will conduct door-to-door canvassing preparing residents for the arrival of the Census form and will follow-up to remind residents to return their forms. In addition, to maximize impact, the NAACP will utilize an automated texting and phone banking program to alert households that Census canvassers will be visiting their homes if they have not returned their form.

"The NAACP has a vested interest in ensuring that hard to count populations are educated about and ultimately counted during the 2010 Census. We know federal and local governments use Census information to distribute over \$400 billion dollars every year – or \$4 trillion over a ten year period – in much needed aid to local communities. It is our mission to ensure that traditionally undercounted communities have access to the necessary funds, services, political representation, public infrastructure and private investment impacted by the census count," stated NAACP President and CEO Benjamin Todd Jealous.

It is estimated that 6.4 million people were missed during the 2000 Census, most of which were low income, racial and language minorities and children. In addition, according to one estimate, the 2000 census missed nearly 1 million people of color.

"Our communities cannot afford to be undercounted in 2010. Our NAACP units are uniquely poised to provide education and motivation around Census participation, especially here in Montgomery County, Maryland, where we have one of the most highly educated and motivated populations throughout the Country" stated Montgomery County NAACP Political Action Chair Phil Selden.

The 2010 Census is a count of everyone living in the United States and is mandated by the U.S. Constitution. Census data are used to distribute Congressional seats to states, to distribute more than \$400 billion in federal funds to local, state and tribal governments each year and to make decisions about what community services to provide. The 2010 Census questionnaire will be one of the shortest in history and consists of ten questions, taking about ten minutes to complete. Strict confidentiality laws protect the confidentiality of respondents and the information they provide.

Founded in 1909, the NAACP is the nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization. Its members throughout the United States and the world are the premier advocates for civil rights in their communities, conducting voter mobilization, and monitoring equal opportunity in the public and private sectors.

For more information please contact Phil Selden, Political Action Chair for the Montgomery County NAACP Unit paselden@gmail.com

THE VALUE OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY'S NAACP "YES WE COUNT" CENSUS INITIATIVE

An accurate Census count is a vital national imperative. It not only means critical resources to underserved communities but political representation, an underpinning of our precious democracy. Today African Americans face great challenges. Our communities are disproportionately impacted by a host of social and economic issues, and a correct Census profile can help address these issues by ensuring the appropriate funding for government services, strong political representation and civil rights enforcement. Examples of social and economic struggles faced by African American communities include:

- A quarter of all Blacks live below the federal poverty level – a poverty rate about twice the national rate. And more than a third of all Black children live in poverty.
- The unemployment rate runs twice that of whites. Studies show that employers would rather hire a white male applicant with a criminal record than an African American man without one. Half of all Black men in their twenties are jobless.
- In many cities, more than half of young African American men do not finish high school; by the time they are in their thirties, six out of ten Black males who drop out of high school are likely to spend time in prison.
- Thirty-eight percent of AIDS deaths in the United States have been among African Americans and of the more than 1 million people living with HIV in the United States of America today, nearly half are black.

In the face of these real life obstacles, Black communities cannot afford to be inaccurately counted in the 2010 Census. Unfortunately, previous Census counts have worsened these challenges by undercounting Blacks and other minorities, children and the poor. According to one estimate, the 2000 Census missed nearly 1 million people of color and actually double-counted some members of the non-Hispanic white population, overestimating their size by approximately 2.2 million people, a number equal to the total white population of Kansas.

In addition, the District of Columbia and the 31 states affected by undercounting, together, lost more than \$4.1 billion dollars. California alone lost \$1.5 billion and Texas lost \$1 billion due to the undercount. Many states also lost federal funds: Louisiana lost \$68.8 million in federal funds, Arkansas lost \$17.1 million, Mississippi lost \$12.5 million and South Carolina lost \$9.2 million. We cannot let this happen in Maryland!

An inaccurate Census count can result in the social, educational, healthcare, and transportation services that are so important to the African American community being reduced or removed all together. An accurate census count is imperative for our communities to receive the federal funding necessary to address the difficult challenges that plague us.

Last year, record numbers of African American people registered to vote and voted for the first time to help elect the first African American President of the United States. They were educated

and engaged in the process and saw results. We urge all Americans, African Americans in particular to take the next step in participating in the democratic process and let their voices be heard again in 2010. We must do everything we can to ensure there is an accurate and complete count of all communities. We cannot afford to be undercounted again in 2010!

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

**THE IMPORTANCE OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY'S NAACP'S
"YES WE COUNT" INITIATIVE**

Dear Editor:

I write to put on notice all members of our community that the Montgomery County NAACP has launched the 2010 "Yes We Count" campaign. This initiative is one of the largest mobilizations for the Census ever. Hundreds of phone banks, text messages and door-to-door canvasses will bring neighbors together to discuss the importance and challenges facing achievement of an accurate Census count both locally and nationally.

The Census is a count of all people in the United States that is used to distribute government funds to communities for schools, hospitals and programs like job training that help people. It is used by businesses to determine where to open new shops, grocery stores and restaurants. It determines political representation for underserved communities. Each one of Montgomery County's residents needs to make sure that we are counted.

We are faced with many challenges: deteriorating public schools, lack of grocery stores in some communities, lack of access to health care and much more.

The Census is an essential way to fight for the resources and respect our community deserves and it means that we will have a voice in our democracy. We hope people will join us. Sign up to host a house party or volunteer for the phone bank or canvass at www.naacp.org.

Thank you,

Henry Hailstock
President Montgomery County NAACP